

# The Legacy of FAIL

## Level Design in a Day 2012

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Lead Level Designer, Epic Games

# Don't be afraid to FAIL!



# ROCK

No pain, no gain.



BACK

A golden trophy cup is centered in the background, with its base and stem visible. The background is a deep blue with some lighter blue, wispy patterns. The trophy is made of a shiny, reflective metal, likely gold or brass.

# Don't be afraid to FAIL!

## How DO people play your game?

- Accessible?
- Attractive to casual players?

## How WILL people play your game?

- Does it have enough depth?
- Hardcore players able to exploit it?



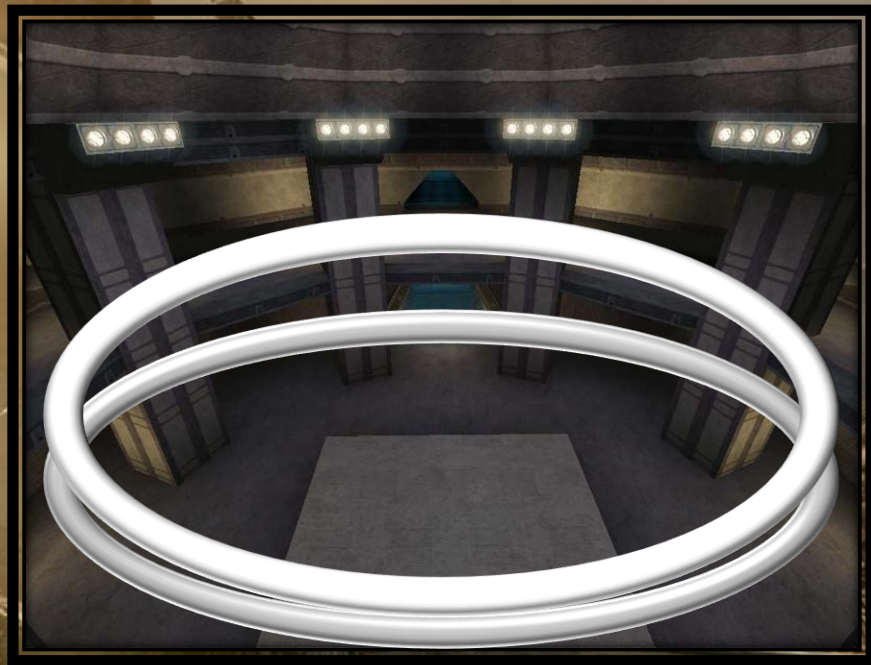
**MP Trenches**

**Gears of War 3**





**Longest Yard**



**Morbias**



Q3DM13



Deck 16

Don't assume that the way it WAS is the way it IS, or the way it WILL BE

## What is Gears of War?





**Don't assume that the way it WAS is the way it IS, or the way it WILL BE**

## What is Gears of War?

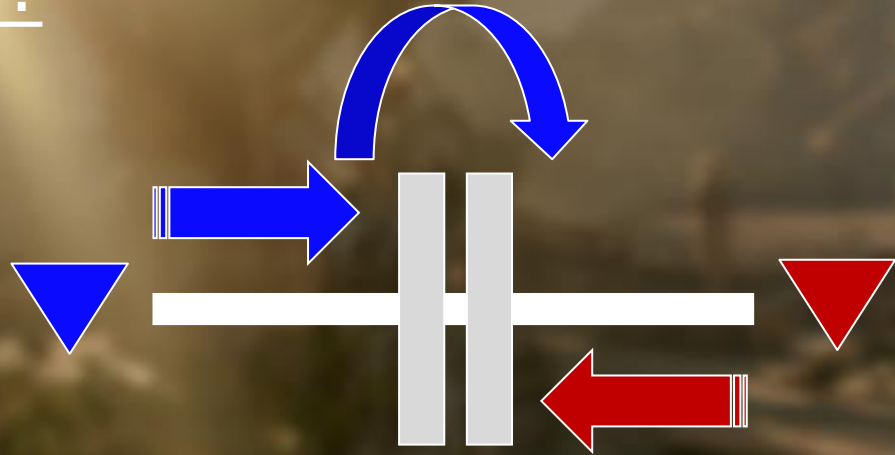
- Cover
- Teamwork
- Flanking



Don't assume that the way it WAS is the way it IS, or the way it WILL BE

## What is Gears of War?

- Cover
- Teamwork
- Flanking





# Trenches (version 1)



Circular design

- No combat front

Trenches too shallow

- Battlefield too porous

# Deadlands



# Gears of War 3



# Trenches (version 2)



Cover density too high

- Combat too close

Trenches too deep

- Blind corners



# Trenches (version 3)



- Cover...
- Teamwork...
- No flanking.



# Trenches (version 4)





# Trenches

# Improved Gameplay Flow



# Trenches

# Improved Gameplay Flow





# Trenches

# Clear Lines of Sight



# Trenches

# Focused Combat Front





# Trenches

# Iteration is king

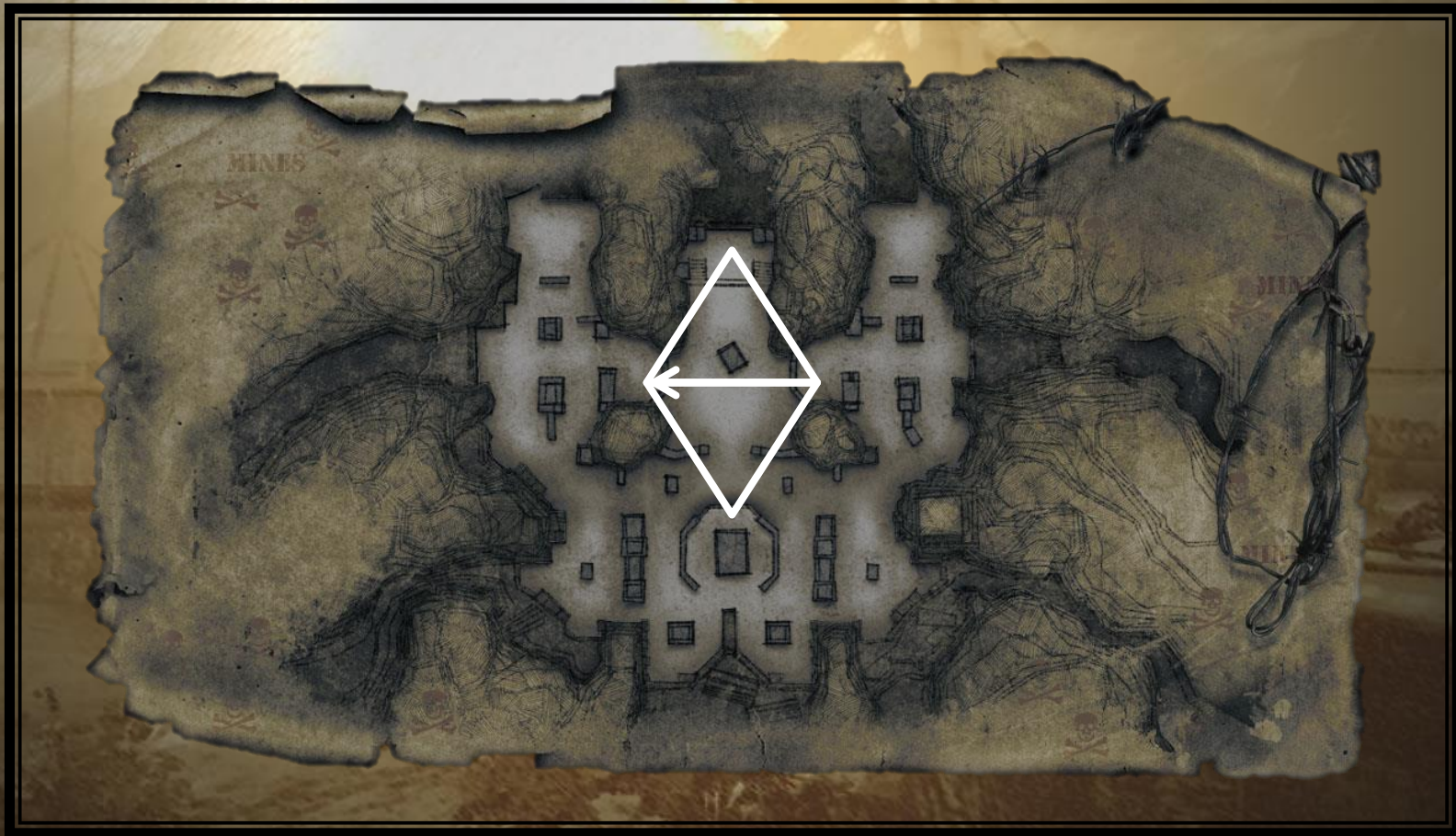
Look at everything objectively and ask:

“How can I make this better”



# Trenches

# Grenade Throw Distance



# Trenches

# Gameplay Balance





# Trenches

# Turn Failure Into Success



# Trenches

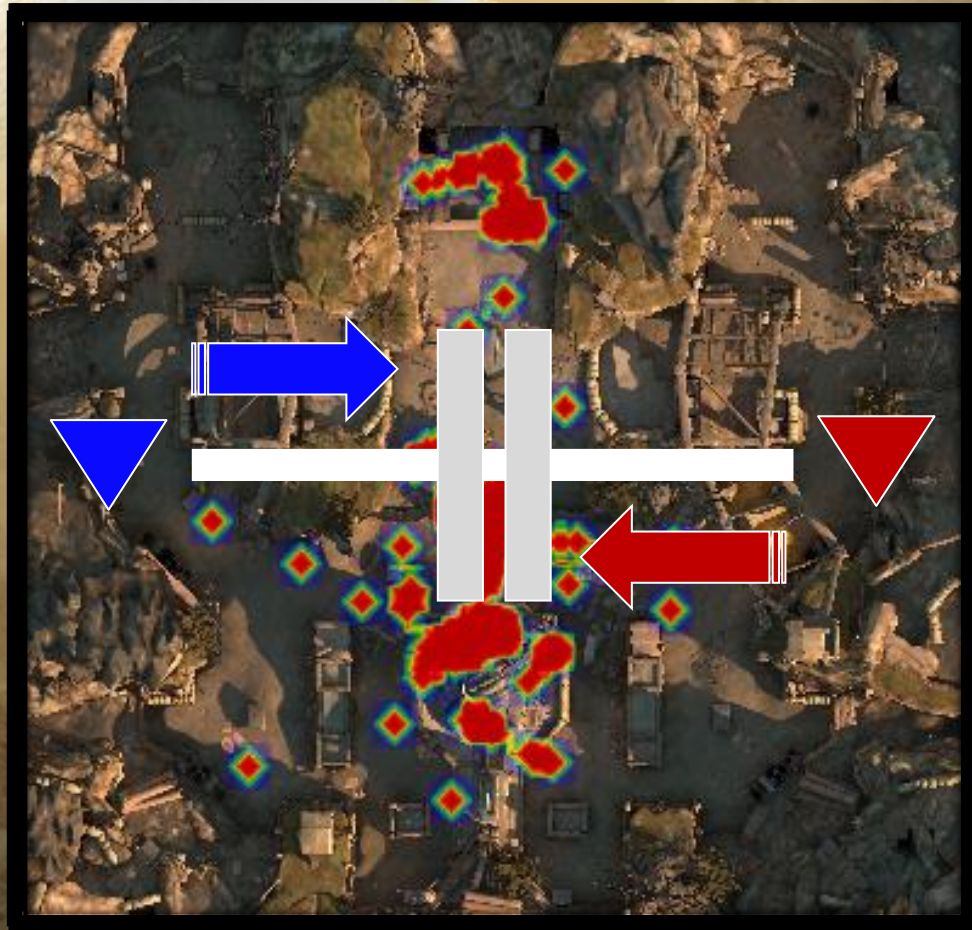
# Turn Failure Into Success





# Trenches

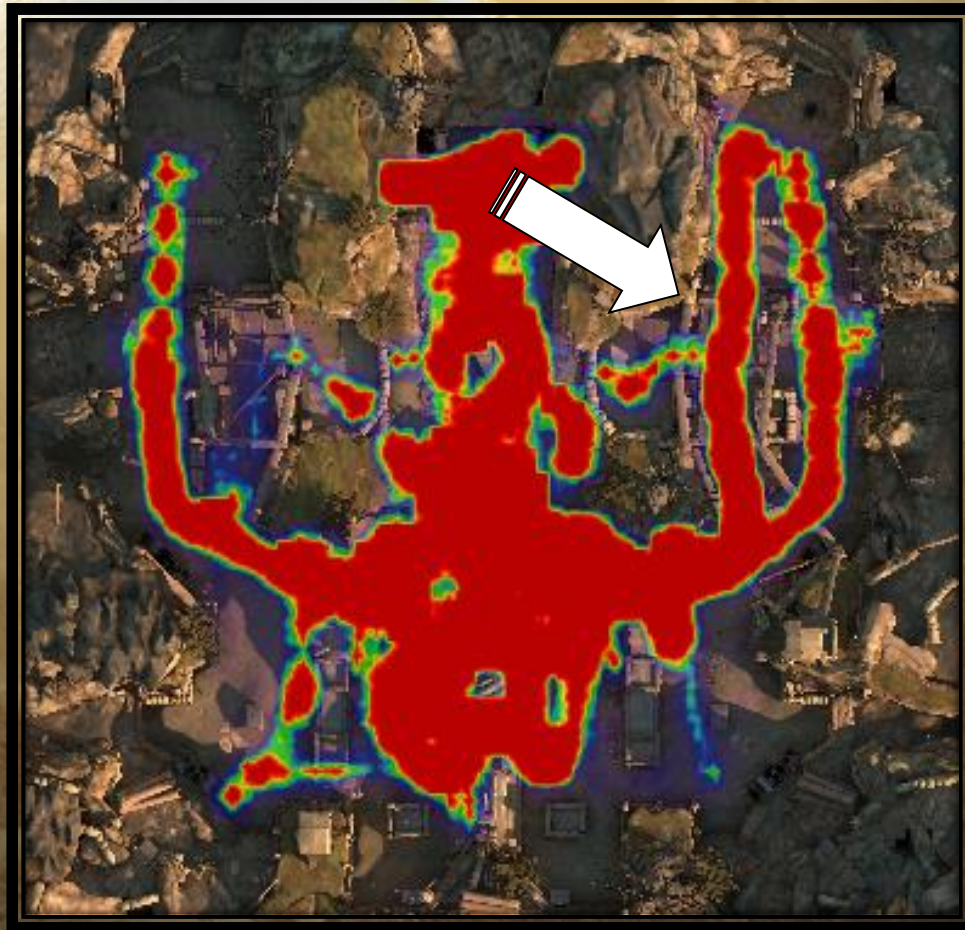
## Data Analysis: Heatmaps





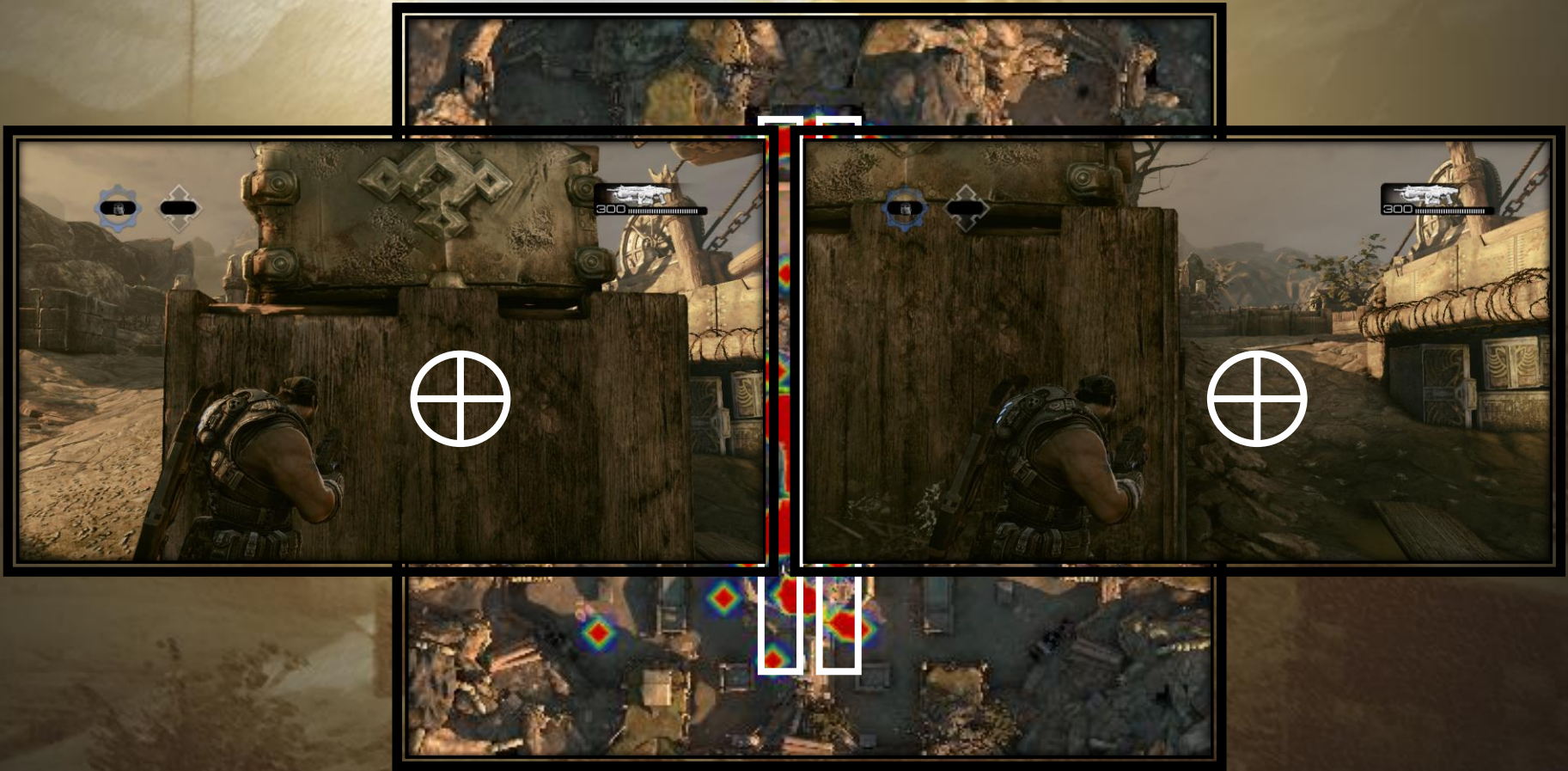
# Trenches

## Data Analysis: Player Movement



# Trenches

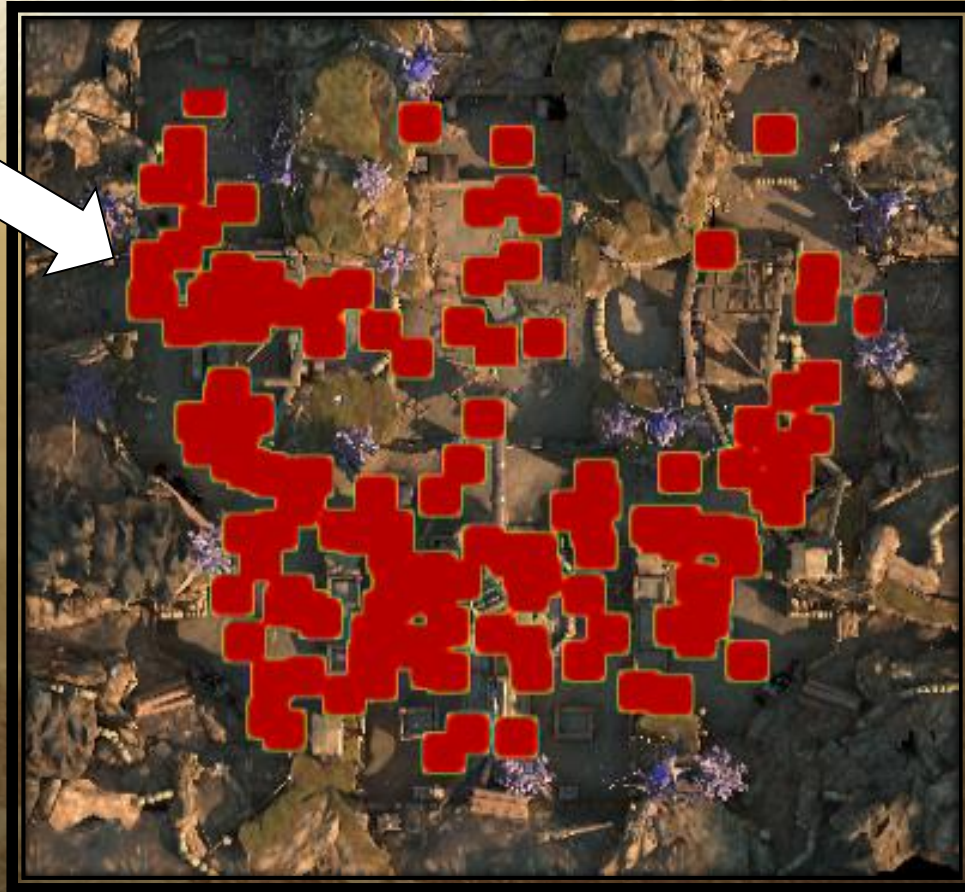
## Data Analysis: Death Locations





Trenches

Data Analysis: Loss of Combat Front



**Players want - and NEED – choice.**

## **How DO people play your game?**

- Accessible?
- Attractive to casual players?

## **How WILL people play your game?**

- Does it have enough depth?
- Hardcore players able to exploit it?



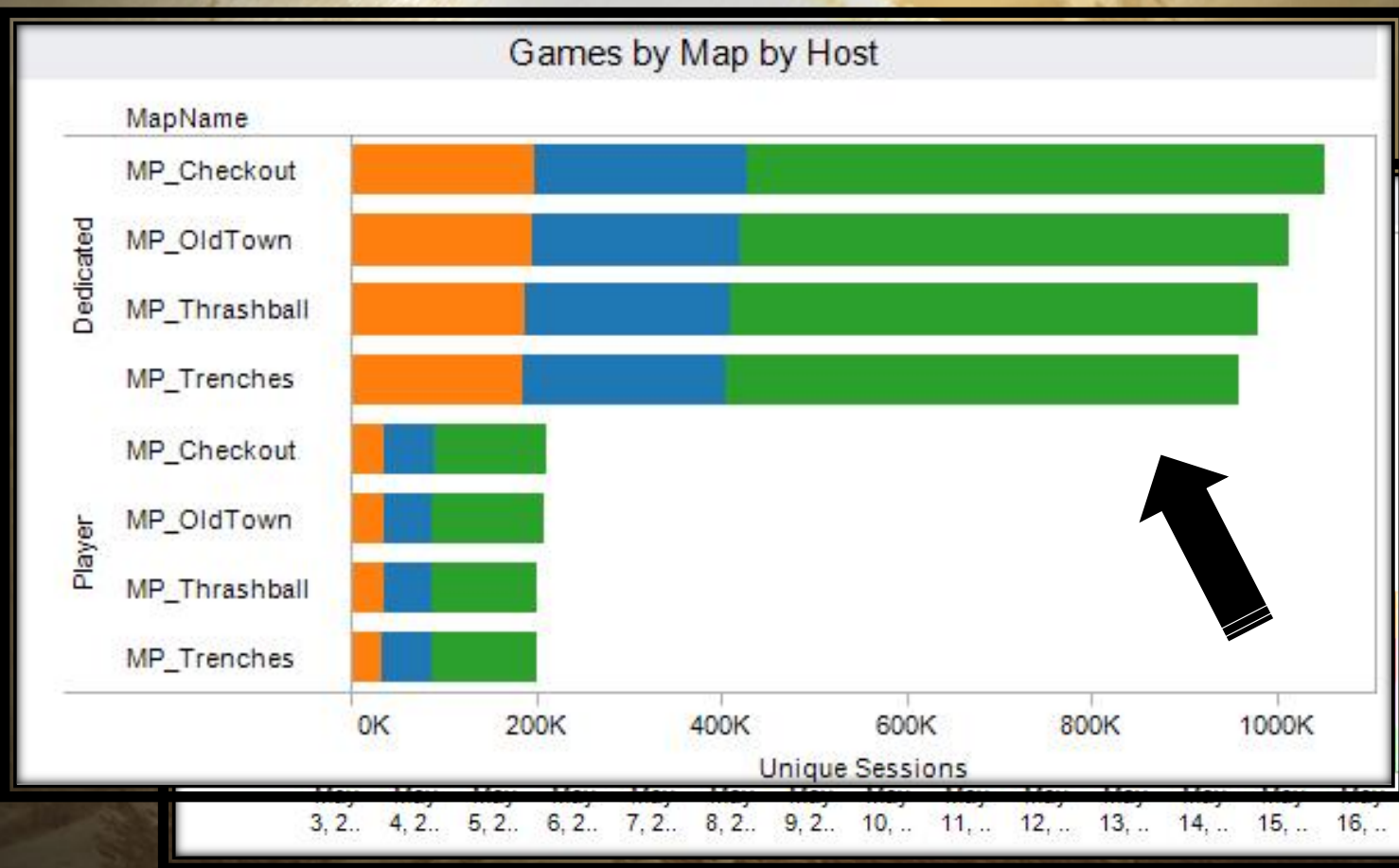
# Trenches

Players want – and **NEED** – choice.



# Trenches

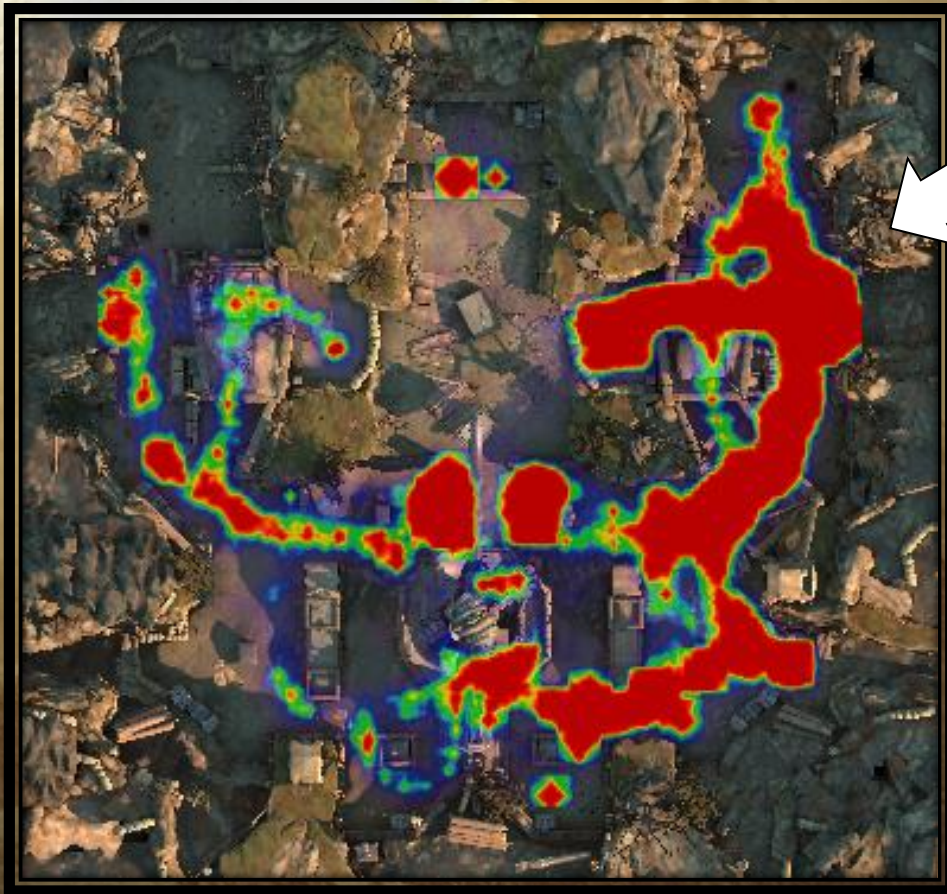
## Beta Test Statistics





Trenches

Heatmaps from public Beta Test



FAIL!





# Trenches

## Heatmaps from public Beta Test



# Trenches

## Heatmaps from public Beta Test



FAIL!



Trenches

# Scientific Analysis of Trenches in Beta Test





# Trenches

## Be the player's advocate – not their judge



# Trenches

# Iteration is king

Look at everything objectively and ask:

“How can I make this better”

# Trenches

Spawns moved out of dead end.





# Trenches

# Camping spots removed.



# Trenches

# Improved Gameplay Flow





Trenches

Improved Gameplay Flow





# Trenches

# Improved Gameplay Flow



# Trenches

# Improved Gameplay Flow





- Turn small failures into big wins
- Don't assume that the way it WAS = the way it IS
- Learn from your mistakes
- Players want and need choice
- Be the player's advocate - not their judge
- Iteration is king





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